

The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

The Church in the Making

ADMIRATION — EMULATION

TIME

IF YOU HAVE A FRIEND

"... AS A MIGHTY STREAM"

ELIJAH

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

ITEMS FROM OUR MAIL BAG

ARE WE HELPING OR HINDERING?

THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT ROCK

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THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

August 13, 1955

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The Church in the Making

—While the World Sleeps

A FEW MONTHS PAST, a small boy who had strong aspirations to become an agriculturist hurried to his mother one morning with the glad news that his garden had been growing while he was asleep. A careful investigation by the family proved his statement true; the peas, the radishes, the lettuce had pushed their way through the ground for a good start after a warm, gentle rain during the night. For all his labor the youthful farmer felt he was on his way toward gathering a bountiful harvest. The thing that puzzled the boy was how his garden could have made such rapid growth while he slept.

In the realms of the spiritual, while the world sleeps, the seed of Truth that had lain dormant for centuries has been discovered and planted, some in good ground. It has come forth and flourished in vigorous growth, it has been cultivated, the radiant sunlight from above has shone upon it, the dews of heaven and water of life have moistened it, till now the harvest is ripe for the sickle. Still the world sleeps on. The sleep is deep, so deep that men are past feeling, unconscious of the fact that through the dark night the garden of the Lord has been growing. The trees of righteousness bear their fruit, and plants of a generous growth are ready, and the golden grain awaits the reapers.

Spiritual Darkness Despite Material Progress

Can it be possible today that darkness covers the earth and gross spiritual darkness the people? Can it be true that a veil of superstition and error covers the face of all nations? Can this be possible when a million church spires rise heavenward and from their pulpits ecclesiastical lights still flicker and shine? Can this be possible in a day when science comes boldly forward to exhibit her accomplishments; a time when men groan under heavy taxation to build new schools in every hamlet; when colleges and universities fling wide their gates and a multitude of men and women with diploma in hand go forth to give the world the so-called higher education, advanced and scientific thought; a day when speed and action are demanded from all who would survive the mad rush of the present age?

The past century was ushered in with candle dips and out with electricity; rode in on horseback and out in an airplane; came in talking neighbor to neighbor and out talking around the world; commenced with a quill pen and finished with a linotype; opened with a slate for learning arithmetic and closed with electronic computers for solving astronomical problems; began with hands for labor and ended with many powers of the universe in harness. Yesterday they scanned the "local" heavens; today they are striving to penetrate the universe. Our forefathers waited patiently at a wayside inn two or three days for a stage-coach; today people are inclined to murmur if they miss the first section of a revolving door.

Here are speed, discovery, and science; but where, where is religion? If these be called advantages under which society should lift itself to higher levels, why then has confidence in state, in home, and society been shaken and shattered? With the loss of faith, the very founda-

tion of morals has been thrown down; so many things have been cast overboard that the nation's bark has lost its ballast. It has become too light to steer. It is impossible to hold it to any settled course. It is beaten and buffeted by every wave of doubt. It is driven hither and thither by every shifting breeze. It has no port ahead. It finds no peace, no rest, no repose and, sad and bitter the thought, in the midst of the howling midnight gale it has no Christ to calm the storm. The great religious teachers who have preached redemption and regeneration for a sin-sick world through man's efforts, have dug in for the winter, trusting that after a long sleep something may develop in the springtime.

Why the World Sleeps

The religious world sleeps today because her guides have missed the path that leads to God. Their followers, worn and weary from traveling in so many different directions, fall down to die in darkness and despair. The religious world sleeps today because it makes no real spiritual appeal to its hearers, awakens no desire for a deep searching of the heart, leaves its hearers as untouched as it finds them. What it offers is all on the surface; there is no richness in it. It has no nourishing qualities, it does not enlighten the mind, it does not arouse or stir the hearer to search the heart. The food is rank spiritual fodder to a few hungry sheep, and the vast number will not eat it at all; and those who would, find no nourishment in it. There is none among the ecclesiastical leaders that speaks with authority.

Jesus Christ was a great Leader, and He spoke with authority. Crowds once followed Him, but the crowds will not receive Christ's message. As He clung to His God-given mission, teaching and preaching the narrow way to life, He saw the crowds melt away; the thousands became hundreds, the hundreds fifties, the fifties tens. At last turning to the little handful that remained He exclaimed, "Will ye go away also?" God's leaders always did and always will speak with authority. We remember the words Jesus spoke to Nicodemus when He said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Matthew tells us He spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes and other religious teachers. The note that rang out from the Hebrew Prophets was, "The Word of the Lord came to me"; "Hear ye the Word of the Lord"; "Thus saith the Lord." These were the constant claims of the Prophets. It was the secret power of the early disciple. It was the strength of the primitive Church. It gave Paul the courage to proclaim, "I know whom I have believed."

Multitudes are out today with props, trying to shore up religion. Theology endeavors to bolster it up with new arguments, methods of salesmanship, new policies and programs: somehow and some way they think religion must be kept going. Let us thank God today that the early Christians did not have to go around with props to bolster up and keep religion going. Religion kept them going. It was the propelling force of their life.

The religious world sleeps today because there is no

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE

note of affirmation in her message of the living God, and sad indeed it is to see her frantic efforts to find a substitute. The religious world is fast asleep today because her leaders do not know what life and eternity are all about. Figuratively speaking, the world sleeps today because men love to make their homes on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Their thinking is constantly enveloped in fog. The clear searching light of God's Truth never breaks through their mind. Their mentality is hazy; they befog everything they undertake to illuminate.

Now, fog is a very dangerous thing. Even the storms, dreadful as they are, and the mad, mountainous waves that threaten to engulf the ship, are not the things most feared by the mariners. Next to icebergs it is fog they dread above everything else. When it shuts down around you until you cannot see before or behind, above or below, when the sun is shut out from your vision, when there is not a star seen and you have nothing by which to steer your course, then you feel creepy and long to be on land again. It has been said that fog is good for lima beans. They thrive in clammy darkness. But fog has little to offer men. Science claims that a bank of fog 3 feet thick 6 feet high and 100 feet long contains less than one-seventh of a glassful of water. Whether this be true or not, you cannot quench your thirst with fog. There is only one safe thing to do: keep away from it both in the natural and the spiritual.

A great ecclesiastical light has said, "If you have any certainties, let us have them; we have enough doubts of our own." It is no wonder people waver when their leaders are filled with doubt.

A writer said, "How can we find consolation, hope, peace and joy without whistling to keep up courage?" Let us thank God today we have something more than a whistle to keep up faith and courage.

The world sleeps today because its greatest leaders have muddy minds. Their thinking is not clear, their thoughts are like the Missouri, always absorbing the sediment though which it flows. The spiritual sleep of the world is so deep, the Adam-man so unconscious, he never senses that an operation has been performed upon his side, a rib removed and made into a woman, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the Church Triumphant. In the morning when he awakes from his slumber, he will discover that a Bride has been presented to Christ, the Bridegroom, the second Adam. It says, "God closed up the flesh." It was all He cared to remove from humanity—a rib.

Wake! and to the Uplands

We know something of the spirit of a few men who might be called geographers of the Physical Uplands. In May 1953, Mount Everest, the highest spot on the face of the earth, was finally conquered by Hillary of New Zealand, and Norkay of India. There are spiritual uplands that are far more important to humanity than such physical regions. Our spiritual uplands deal with the eternal verities of life. They, too, must have their explorers, their daring pioneers. These brave souls will go out and come back with pictures more thrilling than ever an explorer brought back from Everest.

It has been the business of God's prophets and teachers to go out ahead, calling on others to follow, to come up higher, to go forth and explore the spiritual uplands. We have seen such a leader go forth to explore the Mount Everest of the spiritual world. Our founder, the late Rev. L. T. Nichols, lifted his people in these last days to higher levels in their living. Because of his ministry we have been lifted from lower levels to spiritual uplands, while

the mighty men of the religious world have been asleep. We have heard one as copious as a great reservoir, who poured forth the water of life like an upturned cloud. He was a geographer of the spiritual uplands. Today, if it had not been for his leadership, we, too, should be like unto the world, fast asleep.

No people on earth today can thank God as can this people, for no people on earth have so much to thank God for. We can say with the beloved John, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." What shall we do who have heard the call to "awake thou that sleepest, . . . and Christ shall give thee light"? What shall we do who have heard the midnight cry and have arisen from deep slumber and taken the lamp in hand to go forth to meet the Bridegroom? Is the lamp filled with oil? Is the wick trimmed? Is it brightly burning? Are our garments clean and spotless? Are we ready to sit down to the wedding supper? These are questions we should ask ourselves daily. Shall we be found eating and drinking with the drunkard? Shall we be found smiting our fellow-servant with the fist of wickedness? Shall we be found not only awake but watching every act, deed, and thought; holding the law of God in one hand and our soul in the other? Let us remember that to have been awakened and instructed is no assurance than we cannot fall asleep again.

You will remember that Samson lost his strength, his glory, his honor, while he slept. He was bound with cords till his enemies rejoiced over him. We may not be bound with ropes and cords, but with chains of indifference, of carelessness and unbelief, till our strength is turned to weakness and our glory to shame. The good Book says this all happened to Samson while asleep. Yes, he fell asleep on the lap of his enemy. When he rose to go forth, his strength was gone. He did not realize the Lord had departed from him. Do we realize that we who have had our eyes opened and enlightened can still fall asleep in the lap of a woman more cunning, more crafty and treacherous, than Delilah—a woman who has soothed to sleep by fair speeches many a mighty man? Her words drop as honey, her mouth is smoother than oil, her lips are full of flattery. She has cast down many, wounded many; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. She has made the great of all nations to drink from her hand the cup of wine she has mingled. Her house is the way to the grave, going down to the chambers of death. If we enter there, she will rob us of our honor, our strength, our hopes and glory. In the morning of God's judgments, when a mighty shout is heard in the land, we may arise to forth, but we shall find our strength gone and the Lord departed from us.

"Let Us not Sleep as Do Others"

In the book of Job we find a true picture of the world's condition: "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. . . . Now a thing was . . . brought to me, and my ear received a little thereof, in thought from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men." Can it be possible God has so blessed us that when we see the world in deep spiritual slumber we can call ourselves children of light, children of the day? "Therefore," says the great Apostle, "let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober"—ah, but this is not enough—"putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." As children of light it is well to remember the words of our beloved Paul: "And then you know what this Crisis means, you

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ADMIRATION—EMULATION

THREE is a story told of a majestic work of nature, a massive rock formation on a mountain side which, viewed from a sufficient distance, presented the likeness of a human countenance. It was called the Great Stone Face. The features high and noble, the expression grand and benign, it became a source of divine inspiration to the inhabitants of the valley which it overlooked. According to the legend, the belief was prevalent that there would appear some day a prophet in the likeness of the majestic image.

Among the inhabitants to whom the belief was common, was a lad named Ernest who had been told of the expected prophet as he gazed upon the Great Stone Face from beside his mother's knee. Impressed at that early age with the benign aspect, his mind was instilled with hope and expectation of some day beholding so great and noble a personage. Ernest became engrossed with the desire to imitate the moral excellence that would reflect such a countenance. As the years went on it became his teacher, his meditation and his ideal, as he imagined in the vast features lines of highest virtue, inspiring the youth with sincerity, purity, humility.

It was his daily habit as hours of toil ceased, to go apart and gaze and meditate upon the object of his admiration.

The months and years sped by with greater rapidity as Ernest approached middle-age. But now as always he took time to study his high ideal. So much of his time was now spent for unworldly hopes and lofty aspirations, that it seemed as though he had been talking with angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares. The pure, high simplicity of his thought took shape in good deeds, until all around were impelled to admire his remarkable characteristics.

At length, white hairs appeared on the head of Ernest, reverent wrinkles on his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks. He was becoming an aged man now. But not in vain had he grown old; more than the white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind. His wrinkles and furrows were inscriptions that Time had engraved and in which were written depths of wisdom. As the years rolled on Ernest became more loved, more highly revered by his neighboring inhabitants as they witnessed his life rich with virtue. One evening it was requested that Ernest discourse before the village fold. It was to take place in the open air. At a small elevation there appeared a niche. Into this natural pulpit Ernest ascended, and threw a look of familiar kindness around upon his audience. They sat in the sunshine falling indirectly over them. In another direction was seen the Great Stone Face. Ernest began to speak, giving to the people of what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life he had lived. It was not mere breath that he uttered; they were words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy thought was melted into them.

The people, as they listened, felt that the being and character of Ernest were of a nobler strain than ever they had beheld. Their eyes glistened with tears, as they gazed reverentially at the venerable man, and thought within themselves that never was there an aspect so worthy of a prophet and a sage as that noble countenance, with the glory of white hair diffused about it. At a distance, but distinctly to be seen, high up in the golden

light of the setting sun, appeared the Great Stone Face, with hoary mists around it, like the white hairs around the brow of Ernest.

In sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that one, by an irresistible impulse, threw his arms aloft and shouted, "Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face."

We too have an object of admiration, but unlike the Great Stone Face our object is a *living* monument—the perfect character, situated on the Mountain of Holiness. "Our eyes fixed upon Jesus as the pioneer and perfection of faith." He is our ideal, our pattern, our example, our model. All through the ages, they who have attained that same goal, have served as a standard. Each one who has molded into his being the virtues of a high and noble character has been an inspiration to those around and those that follow. As we see one beside us taking on the Christlike characteristics, we behold a visible standard, and our admiration provokes emulation.

Paul used Christ as his great pattern and shaped into his life the noble features so perfectly that he was able to say, "Copy me as I copy Christ" (I Cor. 11:1, Moffatt).

Not only did Paul use Christ as his ideal, but Peter and John also took on themselves the characteristics of Christ to such a degree that it was apparent to all "that they had been with Jesus."

Having chosen such a high ideal, let us begin at once to acquire the necessary features, for it is a lifetime pursuit. We must study, meditate and pattern after the likeness of that perfect Character.

While working with our hands, our minds should be dwelling constantly on high and elevating thoughts—the things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. The most noble things in the world are noble thoughts, and the greatest art in life is to have as many of them as possible. Our countenance will reflect the quality of our thoughts; therefore we must take care that we entertain no desires unsuitable to virtue, and nurture no habits which will deface and mar our character. Pure thoughts can be advanced by using the rule, "What we are ashamed to do before men we should be afraid to think before God."

Sincerity is a virtue which requires months and years of study and practice. It is considered by some as being the first of all virtues. Joshua exhorts: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." Sincerity is doing what we pretend and profess, performing what we promise, and really being what we seem and appear to be. And who is more highly admired, more highly respected than he who meets this standard! Sincerity, the deep, genuine, heartfelt sincerity has no part, no relationship with sham and hypocrisy.

He who is one sort and conducts himself like another sort will eventually be exposed.

Purity is another feature which must be boldly and strongly hewn in our being. Purity brings beauty within and is reflected without. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." She is pure through and through. Purity leaves no room for the dark stain of guilt, no room for improper motives and speech. Purity makes men of transparent character.

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TIME



A conversation by two quoters, A and B, as they journeyed toward the setting sun.

A. "What is time?"

B. "I asked an aged man, with hoary hairs, wrinkled and curved with worldly cares: 'Time is the warp of life,' said he; 'O tell the young, the fair, the gay, to weave it well!'"

"I asked my Bible, and methinks it said, 'Time is the present hour, the past has fled; Live! live today! Tomorrow never yet on any human being rose or set.'"

A. I have observed that "Time is so fleeting that if we do not remember God in our youth, age may find us incapable of thinking about Him."

B. Indeed, "Make use of time if thou lovest eternity; yesterday cannot be recalled; tomorrow cannot be assured; only today is thine, which if thou procrastinate, thou losest; and which if lost is lost forever. One today is worth two tomorrows."

A. Likewise "spend your time in nothing which you know must be repented of; in nothing on which you might not pray for the blessing of God; in nothing which you could not review with quiet conscience on your dying bed; in nothing which you might not safely and properly be doing if death should surprise you in the act."

B. I remember that once "an Italian philosopher said that time was his estate; an estate indeed which will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labors of industry."

A. And, mark my word, "All that time is lost which might be better employed."

B. You know, it is a notable fact that "God, who is liberal in all His other gifts, shows us, by the wise economy of His providence, how circumspect we ought to be in the management of our time, for He never gives us two moments together!"

A. It is true. "You and I have just so much life to live. We can't save it up. Time is like manna. It falls from heaven each day, but you can't save any to eat tomorrow. It always spoils over night."

They journeyed in silence for some paces. Then continued A,

"You can live only today, and to get the most out of it you have to live every day up to the hilt. None of us have the vitality for this much intensity, but the ideal is to live every day, every minute, as if that were the last day or minute you were to have."

B. A solemn thought, hence the question, "If this were the last semester you had to teach, how would you teach your course? If this were the last meal you could prepare, how would you do it? If this were the last chance you would get to experiment on the problem, what are the best possible hypotheses and methods? If this were the last day your mate, one of your children or a friend, had to live, how would you treat him? Instead of reading any silly magazine, what book would you read if it were the last? This does not mean your life need be hurried and hectic. It means your choices will be serious and be worthy of your best capabilities."

A. And so it is, my brother, "Time was, is past; thou canst not it recall: time is, thou hast; employ the portion small; time future, is not and may never be; time present, is the only time for thee."

B. A profitable discourse, this. Now—"what saith the Scriptures?"

A. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is *time to seek the Lord.*"

B. How true. Well we know "the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles."

A. "See then that ye walk circumspectly," comes the voice of the great Apostle, "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

B. So knowing, let us remember always, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

And they hastened their steps in the evening's lengthening shadows.

If You Have a Friend

People talk a great deal about the weather, but nobody does anything. Our appreciation of our fellows' qualities and achievements is often similarly inactive. We ourselves feel it; but we say nothing about it, give it no tangible and encouraging form.

If you have a friend worth loving,
Love him! yes, and let him know
That you love him, ere life's evening
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
Of a friend—till he is dead?

If you hear a song that thrills you,
Echoing the praise of God,
Stirring on to swifter motion
In this path the saints have trod,
Reassure the singing brother,
Such song deserves another.

If you hear a prayer that moves you
By its humble, pleading tone,
Join it! Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not your brother share
The strength of "two or three" in prayer?

If you see the hot tears falling
From a brother's weeping eyes,
Share them, and your kindly sharing
Strengthens more those kindred ties.
Why should anyone be glad
When a brother's heart is sad?

If a silvery laugh goes rippling
Through the sunshine on his face,
Share it! 'Tis the wise man's saying—
For both grief and joy a place.
There's health and goodness in the mirth
In which an honest laugh has birth.

If your work is made more easy
By a friendly, helping hand,
Say so! Speak out brave and truly
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness
All enriching as you go—
Leave them! Trust the Harvest-Giver;
He will make each seed to grow.
So, until the happy end,
Your life shall never lack a friend.

Here's a statement worth the saying:
There's indeed a crying need
On this way to life we're trav'ling
For encouragement's good seed;
Plant it! Tend it carefully!
It will blossom cheerfully.

"By friendship you mean the greatest love, the greatest usefulness, the most open communication, the noblest sufferings, the severest truth, the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"... AS A MIGHTY STREAM"

NO ONE who has ever stood on the solid ground above the falling water at Niagara Falls and viewed the awe-inspiring sight it presents, could doubt the power factor of water in motion. But a fraction of the water of Niagara, when diverted through the turbines in the power houses, generates enough electric power to supply several near-by cities, and in addition a surplus is transmitted hundreds of miles to distant points over power-transmission lines.

The Amazon ranks high among earth's great rivers, hence is a good example of the possibilities of a mighty stream. Draining as it does an immense basin subjected to heavy tropical rains, the volume of water flowing through its channel is enormous. It is said that upon emptying into the ocean the force of its current is so great that it pushes a path out more than 200 miles before losing its freshness in the briny Atlantic.

The Prophet Amos employed the simile of running water and a mighty stream to impress us with the thought that the qualities of judgment and righteousness are needed in great volume to offset the influences for evil that beset the Christian on every side. He said, "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

We might have small rivulets of goodness, judgment, mercy and righteousness flowing through our lives—most wicked men have some good streaks in their make-up—but in order for the good qualities to predominate 100 percent, they must be in quantities simulating a mighty stream.

A mighty river completely covers its river-bed. We cannot conceive of as much as a square inch of earth's surface over which it flows remaining dry or unaffected by it. Hence if we allow the principles of judgment and righteousness to flow through our lives as a mighty stream, it will completely dominate our life pattern. Not a single activity of our lives can escape being affected by it. It will cover our speaking, leaving no place for harmful words, impatient words, vulgar words, lying words, boastful words, foolish words; but will impel us to speak only to edification, to have our conversation always with grace, seasoned with the salt of righteousness, that it may minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).

It will control our thinking. An evil thought precedes every evil action, hence the thoughts must be controlled. "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9), therefore this mighty river will direct our thought channel away from foolish, sinful thoughts, and actuate us to think upon the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8).

The man or woman completely enveloped by this mighty stream of righteousness will heed the admonition to redeem the time, knowing that the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). He or she will have no time to squander on time-killing games, dance parties, or in places of amusement, when there is such a crying need in the world for acts of kindness, and so many people who have not yet heard the gospel or good news of God's Kingdom to come on earth.

The man being directed by this stream of righteousness will not choose his course in temporal affairs at random. His acceptance or rejection of any proposition confronting him will not be dictated by his natural likes or dislikes for the same, but the current of the mighty river flowing through his life will impel him to ask: Will this be to my advantage spiritually? will it be helpful to

others? can I do it to the glory of God? (I Cor. 10:31).

The chief difference between a river and a lake is motion. It is enlightening to note that Amos, in enforcing this lesson on right living, did not choose as an example a placid lake or pond, but a mighty rushing stream. A Christian's life cannot be static. Progress in the divine life, the same as in temporal matters, demands action. We have Jesus' own words to this effect, "... the kingdom of God is preached, and every man *presseth* into it." "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate." "Blessed are they that *do* his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Luke 16:16; 13:24; Rev. 22:14).

Both progress and expansion are symbolized by a flowing river. The mighty river may start from a small rivulet, but other small streams add their waters to it until eventually it swells to great proportions. So a Christian's life starts from a small beginning, but to be successful must grow. Paul speaks in I Thess. 4:1 of this need for expansion, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Patient Job voiced this same statement (ch. 17:9), "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Again in Proverbs 4:18 the same thought is expressed: "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Every object that floats upon the surface of a river moves in the same direction that the river is moving. Just imagine our surprise, should we see a large tree, uprooted by the surging waters of a flood tide, persistently forcing its way upstream! But, no, it always goes with the current. Again making the application, if God's truth as a mighty stream flows through our life, we shall always be moving in the direction of that river. Also our movements will not be spasmodic, will not oscillate from one direction to the other, but that river will so direct us that we, like Paul, will "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14): with the result that we will "keep judgment" and do "righteousness at all times" (Ps. 106:3).

With but few exceptions, rivers flow into the ocean. Likewise all who are supported upon the surface of this river of God, and remain steadfast to its course, will be borne to the ocean of endless immortal life in the glorious Kingdom of God.

The self-respecting person cannot flout the self-respect of others, cannot do unto others what he would resent having done to himself, for he who wounds the self-respect of another thereby mars and scars his own self-respect.

Without self-respect there can be no genuine success. Success won at the cost of self-respect is not success—for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own self-respect?

Unless one builds on a foundation of self-respect, one's life structure, no matter how glittering and imposing on the outside, is corroded and honey-combed within, liable to collapse ignominiously at any moment.

—Sel.

ELIJAH

TO WHAT HEAVEN DID HE GO?

ELIJAH'S earthly career closed with the same apparent abruptness which marked its beginning. His minister, Elisha, had followed him from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, and thence to Jordan. The crossing of Jordan, which they accomplished dry shod by means of Elijah's miraculous parting of the waters, was measuring out the last moments of their loving companionship. Beyond Jordan "there appeared a chariot* of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2: 11).

On the other hand, in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus He said plainly, "No man hath ascended up to heaven" (John 3: 13).

Does this statement contradict the Old Testament narrative of Elijah's translation to heaven?

A solution of this problem lies in knowledge of the fact that different compartments of the heavens are mentioned in the Bible. We read in Amos 9: 6, "It is he that buildeth his stories in the heavens."

We know from Heb. 12: 2 that Jesus is dwelling "at the right hand of the throne of God" and from Eph. 4: 10 that He "ascended far above all heavens." One of the definitions of this word is "to ascend to the highest room."

We know from John 3: 13 that Elijah did not ascend to the highest heaven; he was not taken to the throne of God.

This is in harmony with the divine principle which was followed under the Mosaic economy. The Tabernacle (a portable sanctuary or place of worship for the Israelites during their Wilderness wanderings) included two sections: the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place. So Christ, our High Priest has gone into the Holy of Holies, the highest heaven, the dwelling place of the Most High, to sit at the Father's right hand until He comes forth to bless the people. Elijah has gone into the Holy Place, one of the lower stories in heaven; only Christ has ascended to the highest room.

Since Elijah has been living well over 2,500 years is he not immortal?

The answer is, No. "Christ . . . only hath immortality" (I Tim. 6: 16). He is the only member of our race who has received the change from corruption to incorruption. As Paul declared in I Cor. 15: 23, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Christ's coming is the time of judgment and rewards. Every faithful member of His body, Elijah included, must await that hour to receive the change from mortality to immortality, for "Christ . . . only hath immortality."

What was the purpose of Elijah's translation?

The Almighty has a special work for Elijah to perform, and evidently deemed necessary a special time of preparation and instruction.

Elijah comes as herald of Christ's Second Advent. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the

heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4: 5, 6).

Only his coming will prevent the earth from being smitten with a curse. Only his coming will arrest the swelling tide of wickedness which otherwise would engulf all mankind. As of old when he stood at the Jordan and with one stroke of his mantle smote the waters so that they parted hither and thither, so at his return he will be vested in divine power until at his decree the waters of wickedness shall stand still on either hand.

For so great a mission—a mission which priest and president alike have attempted, and failed to perform—surely years of instruction under heavenly tutelage are necessary.

THE CHURCH IN THE MAKING

(Continued from page 2)

know it is high time to waken up; for Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is far on in the night, the day is almost here; so let us drop the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of the light; let us live decorously as in the open light of day—no revelry or bouts or drinking, no debauchery or sensuality, no quarreling or jealousy. No, put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh" (Rom. 13: 11—14, Moffatt).

We who have had our eyes opened to see the light shining in a dark place and have heard the voice of Hope, will do well to look at self with deep searchings of heart. As we look upon the dark picture of the world's spiritual ills today, it is no wonder thousands are asking, "Is there any purpose in human life?" Then we ask ourselves likewise. Are the hurrying years carrying us forward to a definite goal? or are we like caged squirrels who race year after year in their circular cages, always busy but never arriving anywhere? As the world sleeps—

God is working His purpose out, as year succeeds year, God is working His purpose out, as the time is drawing near.

Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as waters cover the sea.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Here is our path, here is our hope, here is our destiny.

ADMIRATION — EMULATION

(Continued from page 3)

As we increase in years and these virtues become a ruling power in our lives, it will be apparent to all with whom we come in contact that we are taking on a new aspect, a new nature. The change must be so complete that no one will see what we naturally were. Not in a week, however, nor a month, is it made. It takes years of patient continuance in well doing. As these features develop into noble deeds they may impel others not only to admire our characteristics but inspire them to emulation.

And as we grow still older, as the white hairs scatter on the head, the wrinkles on the forehead and furrows in the cheek, may it be said of us, "Not in vain have they grown old. Behold! they are indeed the very likeness of that Perfect Image."

* "Chariot"—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (Psalm 68: 17).

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT



During the coming months, the Lord willing, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish answers to questions which are asked by our readers. Personal replies to any Biblical question will be sent to all correspondents, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. Only the most helpful discussions will be published for the benefit of other readers, and no names will be mentioned.

Is the Megiddo Mission in any way affiliated with any other religious organization?

Since the time it was founded, 1880, the Megiddo Mission has been independent and self-supporting. It is in no way affiliated with any other religious body, large or small.

What does the Megiddo Mission believe about God?

We believe there is but one God, all-powerful, the Creator and supreme Ruler of all things. God is a person (Hebrews 1:3) in whom dwells all wisdom, justice and mercy (Psalm 89:14).

How do you rate the Bible as compared with other literature or the sacred books of the Orient?

We hold the Bible to be the Book of all books. There is no book like it. Its writers were inspired by God who alone can foretell future events. It surpasses all literature, whether that of the present day, the Elizabethan Era, or previous dates. It surpasses the sacred books of the East and proves itself divine by its prophetic utterances, whereas other writings are only the works of man. The sacred books of the East contain no historic prophecies, but the Bible describes in clear outline the rise and fall of empires (Daniel 2). The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews were subjects of prophecy (Luke 21:24; Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). And the condition of the world today is clearly foretold by Jesus, the Prophets, and the Apostles. In this respect especially the books of the Orient and other literature fall far short.

Further, the Bible contains promises of a glorious future for earth's inhabitants and these promises are an inspiration to higher and nobler living.

We are trying to live the Christian life but have difficulty in controlling our children. Do you believe they should be allowed to grow up in their own way as many schools teach today, or do you believe in strict discipline?

It is the duty of parents, who themselves want to be Christ-like, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Failure in this respect is a violation of God's law as much as breaking any other commandment. Children should be taught to obey as early as possible. While the right precepts are being instilled into their minds a right example is a "must," for children are perfect imitators. For instance, it would be difficult to teach children to be kind and considerate if they witness parents quarreling—or worse.

Children require discipline just as much as they need love. Neither by itself will suffice. Love alone leads to indulgence and a pampered child. Discipline without love begets resentment which later grows into bitter hate. It is the devoted and skillful blending of the two that de-

velops adults who are a joy and comfort to their parents and a credit to society.

Do you believe there will be an all-out nuclear war?

The Good Books says: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29). No man knows what the future may bring forth. We do know, however, that the day of the Lord is near and that Christ will soon be here to rule in righteousness and abolish war. We know also by divine prophecy that the nations, being strong at His coming, will unite to go to war against Christ and the saints. Nuclear experts agree that should such a war occur, civilization would be left in ruins. Should that happen the nations could not be strong to rise against the Lord.

We do not expect civilization to be ruined, but, rather, with the Lord's intervention and a righteous rule established the earth will go on progressing eternally.

We hear much today of evangelists saving people by the thousands—instant salvation, at that. Just how does that harmonize with what Jesus said: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13)?

The salvation of present-day evangelists is only a delusion. The words of Jesus are as true today as when spoken. Salvation is given at the end of the race, and only those who have run successfully shall be worthy of the prize. Nor is salvation granted man at life's end; but all must await the Lord's return and then everyone shall receive according to his works (Isa. 25:9; II Tim. 4:8; I Peter 5:4; Rev. 22:12).

Do you believe God answers prayers today?

Yes, but quite often the answer is No, for men do not pray according to His will. Prayer is a command (I Thess. 5:17), and if we pray according to His will He hears us (I John 5:14). He will not hear us if we do not keep the commandments which He has commanded us to observe (I John 3:22; Isa. 59:1, 2). We must learn to ask God to give us what He sees is best for us, and not for what we would naturally choose. We cannot ask God to give us that which His Word forbids, nor need we expect Him to do for us what we can do for ourselves. Our prayers should be for God to help us overcome our besetting sins and if we do on our part He will help and arrange circumstances to work for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Do you believe there is a personal devil, tempting men and women to sin?

The word "devil" in the Hebrew and Greek originals signifies "an adversary, an opposer; a slanderer or accuser." This devil is personal only as men and women are personal. Jesus said of Judas, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70); and to an impetuous Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). The only devil in the world is sin and all sinners. Temptation comes from the desires within, not from an evil spirit outside. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed" (James 1:14).

Meditations On the Word

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (I Chronicles 28:9).

King David, stricken in years and feeble in body, has abdicated in favor of Solomon his favorite son, in a hasty move to crush a rebellion headed by another son, Adonijah, who aspires to the throne. Upon the accession of Solomon the revolution has collapsed, for the time, and now the aged ex-monarch has assembled his officers to bid them farewell. In the midst of the nation's disorders, the thing still nearest his heart is his cherished ambition of many years to build or have built a fitting temple for Jehovah, and he takes this opportunity to charge Solomon with the task, ending with the gem of fatherly advice in the text quoted above. Surely no wiser counsel was ever given by a father to his beloved son, and the advice is for us no less than for Solomon (Romans 15:4).

To know the God of our fathers is to understand His law, His will for us. Solomon had great advantages, being instructed by angels, by visions, by the direct word of the Prophets. We can know our Creator only through His works and His revealed Word. "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). This knowledge is by no means universal in this age, nor even popular, only a "very small remnant" being in the way of understanding.

To know, in the full meaning of the verb, is to do the things learned; for knowledge without practice is like a flower without fruit. Nor will a desultory practice be effective, if salvation is our goal; it is all or nothing. Perfection is the Divine standard, yesterday and today and forever. Those who deny the possibility of perfection of character will argue that our actions do not so much matter so long as our heart is right. The fact of this matter is, if our heart is right, our actions will as a matter of course be the same, so that a perfect heart is synonymous with a perfect life. Perfection is not an impossible task; it simply means the keeping of all the commandments of God. If one precept can be kept, then two can; and so on to the end of the analogy, which brings us to perfection. Inversely, if one breach of law could be tolerated, it opens the way for the violation of every commandment, rendering the entire law null and void. Certainly the Almighty would give us no laws which we could not keep, nor any which He did not intend for us to obey.

This perfection of character is no easy task, nor will it ever be attained without the next adjunct mentioned, "a willing mind." A grudging, reluctant, backward-looking service is worse than useless. Unless all willingness and joyfulness enters into the work, we shall never go far toward attaining the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." "I delight to do thy will, O my God," cried the sweet singer of Israel, "yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). Delight is a strong word, but even that is not enough: the highest point, the ultimate, is reached

in Paul's term, "Glorying." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). The thing in which we not only delight but actually *glory* will be our all in all, our meat and drink, the dominant chord, the undertone and overtone of our whole lives. "Glorying in the cross" implies not only our personal, individual relations with our God, but a certain *esprit de corps*, an ardent loyalty to our Captain and to His Church—the unity of the body of Christ.

We may as well make up our minds to give the Creator the kind of service He requires, or take the broad way with the masses—get in step or get out—for we cannot fool God, no matter how hard we try. We may deceive ourselves, we may deceive our fellow men, but we cannot deceive the Almighty, for "the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." He understands us far better than we understand ourselves, for we are His workmanship. He, being our Creator, knows what restraint and guidance we need, and has provided laws fitted especially to our race. To doubt or to break one of the least of His commandments is to question the wisdom of the Lawgiver, a presumptuous and fatal thing to do. King David spoke these words from the depths of bitter experience, for more than once he had tried to "climb up some other way," and had found in every case that it did not pay. Again and yet again he had been pulled abruptly back into the way of sanity by friends who could see him better than he could see himself (these are the eyes of the Lord), whether a righteous Nathan or an unscrupulous Joab. And let it be said to his eternal credit that David was man enough to take the rebukes with humility and good grace and profit by them.

"If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." And He means just that, no more and no less. God will meet us more than half way, but the first move is ours. There is no compulsion: He will never save men or women against their will: but if we seek Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, we shall find at the end of the way a reward far above all we could, with our limited mental powers, imagine in our wildest dreams. Riches and honor are in the left hand of the Wisdom of God, and in her right hand length of days, even eternal life, free from disease, decay, pain or sorrow. And on the other hand, if at the Great Assize we find ourselves on the wrong side, cast off for ever, there will be no sorrow like unto our sorrow, with only ourselves to blame. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

The record reveals the sobering fact that all this excellent advice was, in the long run, lost upon Solomon. After a most promising beginning, his weaknesses soon came to light. That would have been a good thing, had he been willing to do something about them, but he was not. His great prosperity had turned his head; and more and more he trusted in material things, until from a wise and humble child he came to be an old and foolish king, who would no more be admonished (Eccl. 4:13). Did Solomon realize that he was describing himself? We wonder. There is no excuse for Solomon, who, with all his wisdom, so blindly and stupidly threw away his own eternal life. One of the most tragic and sorrowful figures at the Judgment will be this once magnificent king of Israel, when across the wasted years come those long forgotten words of his aged father, "If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

ITEMS FROM OUR MAIL BAG

Gratitude for our latest publication, *History of the Megiddo Mission*, resounds from our mail bag—from England to Africa. The first is from Benin City, Nigeria, B. W. A.

"Dear Sir: I am greatly indebted to you for your kind actions. Words cannot express my happiness. The literature and books you sent me are very useful to me. They are both spiritual and educational. The last copy you sent, *The History of the Megiddo Mission*, is just exemplary in style and contents. The words are soul stirring. . . . Owing to the reading of these books you sent to me, I have now become very interested in the Lord's MESSAGE. . . . I herewith enclose name of my friend who is wishing to have the Light of God from you. A—E. A.—"

Still another by a grateful reader is from Benin City, Nigeria.

"Sir: Greetings to you in Jesus' Name. I have to thank you for the love which you have shown in sending me your religious biweekly paper, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE. I have also received *The History of the Megiddo Mission*, and may God bless you for your preaching and for your clear explanation of some verses in the Bible. I am very much interested in your literature. I have distributed THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE sent to me to my friends, and now I still have many people who are anxious to read your religious books and papers. That is why I drop you this letter by air mail to see whether you can send me some free tracts and papers to distribute to these anxious souls. In fact, with the few papers that you have sent to me, I used to gather many people on Sundays and begin to read to them. With the help of the books I often answer some questions asked by the people. . . . I remain

Yours in Christ, E—J.—"

We quote from another grateful acknowledgement from Aboso, Gold Coast, Africa.

"Dear Brother: I have received your letter and *History of the Megiddo Mission* you sent me, with many thanks. . . . THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE also is received regularly; and all that you have sent to me has been carefully read. . . . The MESSAGE has made me to know my Bible well and has improved me in all my doings, and I trust that you will continue my subscription. I thank you very much, and trust that I may hear from you soon.

Your brother in Christ, J—A.—"

From a reader at Peterboro, Northants, England, is a kind letter of thanks.

"Dear Friend: I am pleased to be able to write and tell you that the *History* has arrived. It is certainly a history of achievement from beginning to end, and I hope that your efforts will be crowned in this world as they surely will be in the next. . . . Thank you very much for the book; there will be quite a few around here read it, and I hope it may be the means of giving food for thought.

Yours very sincerely, H. L. S.—"

From Paisley, Renfrewshire, England, comes another grateful response.

"My dear Brother: Greetings in the precious Name of our Saviour. Duly received your fine copy of *History of the Megiddo Mission*, for which I thank you very much. I am reading it now, and it thrills my heart to learn what can be accomplished when we lay all at the feet of Jesus. God's blessing on the Mission and on all of your publications in these last days. . . . With kind regards and best wishes. Yours very sincerely, D—C.—"

ARE WE HELPING OR HINDERING?

MANY a professed Christian worker is often unconsciously a hinderer of the cause which he is claiming to promote. A vexation arises and our expressions of impatience hinder others from taking it patiently. Disappointment, ailment, or even weather depresses us; and our look or tone of depression hinders others from maintaining a cheerful and thankful spirit. We let out a fearing or discouraged remark, and another's hope and zeal is wet-blanketed. We say an unkind thing, and another is hindered in learning the holy lesson of charity that "thinketh no evil." We yield an inch in some doubtful matter, and another is emboldened to take an ell. We do an inexpedient thing, and another feels justified in doing an unlawful thing.

Paul abstained from many things which would have been lawful to him individually, lest, by indulging, he prove a hindrance to the weak and unestablished brethren. "If meat make my brother to offend," he said, "I will eat no flesh." This principle must be applied in every phase of life's daily intercourse. "The right course," Paul advises, "is to abstain...from anything that your brother feels to be a stumblingblock." This is true Christian helpfulness.

How sadly we may hinder without word or act! For wrong feeling is more infectious than wrong-doing; especially the various phases of ill-temper—gloominess, touchiness, discontent, irritability—do we not know how catching these are?

The contagious influence of negative attitudes is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. In the armies of Israel high morale among the soldiers was regarded of such importance that soldiers of negative attitudes were dishonorably discharged. At Moses' direction the officers spoke unto the soldiers, saying, "What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." Faintheartedness was a hindrance because of its contagiousness, and it is none the less so in spiritual warfare.

Again the lesson comes to us from Israel of old. When the Gadites and the Reubenites sued for an inheritance on the east side of Jordan, while as yet the other tribes must drive out the seven nations from Canaan, Moses compelled the warriors from these two tribes to aid in the conquest of the promised possession, lest, he said, ye "discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them. Shall our brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" By not helping they were hindering.

Jesus agreed, "He that is not with me is against me." We are either for or against, helpers or hinderers; there is no neutrality. There is no standing still. If we are not tugging at the oars, we are drifting downstream.

It is necessary that hindrances come. Indeed, without temptations, trials, stumblingblocks, no strength could be developed. But "woe to the man by whom the hindrance does come! Whoever is a hindrance to one of these little ones who believe in me, better for him to have a great millstone hung round his neck and be sunk in the deep sea." "The Son of man will dispatch his angels, and they will gather out of the Realm [Kingdom] all who are hindrances" (Moffatt's translation).

If the Lord should ask each hindered one, "Who did hinder you?" are our consciences sure that our names would escape mention?

THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT ROCK

Sweet is the solace of Thy love,
My heavenly Friend to me,
While through the hidden way of faith
I journey on with Thee,
Learning by quiet thankfulness
As a dear child to be.

Though from the shadow of Thy peace
My feet would often stray,
Thy mercy follows all my steps,
And will not turn away;
Yea, Thou wilt comfort me at last
If true to Thee I stay.

No other comforter I need
If Thou, O Lord, be mine;
Thy rod will bring my spirit low,
Thy fire my heart refine,
And cause me pain that none may feel
By other love than Thine.

Then in the secret of my soul,
Though hosts my peace invade,
Though through a waste and weary land
My lonely way be made,
Thou, even Thou, wilt comfort me;
I need not be afraid.

O there is nothing in the world
To weigh against Thy will;
Even the dark times I dread the most
Thy covenant fulfill;
And when the pleasant morning dawns
I find Thee with me still.

Still in the solitary place
I would awhile abide,
Till with the solace of Thy love
My soul is satisfied,
And all my hopes of happiness
Stay calmly at Thy side.

On Thy compassion I repose
In weakness and distress;
I will not ask for greater ease
Lest I should love Thee less.
It is a blessed thing for me
To need Thy tenderness.

—Sel. and alt.